

**PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SERVICES (PICS)
NIH - TASK ORDER**

RFTOP#139

TITLE: NIAID OCPL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC LIAISON SUPPORT

PART I – REQUEST FOR TASK ORDER (TO) PROPOSALS

A. POINTS OF CONTACT:

Contract Administration:

John Foley, Contracting Officer

Phone: 301-496-3878

Fax: 301-402-0689

Proposal Address:

Negotiated Contracts Section, AMOB

10301 Fernwood Road

Suite 2NE28, MSC 4811

Bethesda, MD 20817-4811

Invoice Submission:

Accounts Payable, OFM, NIH

Bldg 31, Room B1B39

Bethesda, MD 20892-2045

B. PROPOSED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: *One year from start date(use October 1, 2003 for pricing purposes), with four subsequent possible option years.*

C. PRICING METHOD: *Cost Plus Fixed Fee*

D. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS: *Electronic and hard copy proposals must be submitted prior to the due date below. It is the offeror's responsibility to ensure that electronic submissions contain all of the same elements of a hard copy submission as required by the Statement of Work and other task order proposal sections and instructions. Electronic submissions shall be sent to the email address listed below. Hard copies shall be sent to the postal address below. The offeror should submit separate technical and business volumes. Submit an original and 5 copies of the technical proposal and an original and 1 copy of the business proposal. The contents of each of these volumes should be:*

Technical:

Response to Statement of Work (SOW)

Past Performance Information

*Samples and Sample Response as per the
attached Technical Evaluation Criteria*

*Key Personnel as per the attached Technical
Evaluation Criteria*

Business:

Part II – Contractor's Reply Cover Sheet

Cost and Pricing Information

*Cost breakdown spreadsheets with labor
and other direct costs delineated per the
Services in the attached SOW*

*Subcontracting Plan located at
<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/contract/ref.htm>*

A signed task order form will be required for award and should be submitted electronically and/or submitted with the hard copy

*Electronic Submission:
Word and Excel formats should be emailed
to jfoley@niaid.nih.gov prior to the
response due date.*

*Hard Copy via Postal Address:
John Foley, Contracting Officer
Negotiated Contracts Section, AMOB
10301 Fernwood Road
Suite 2NE28, MSC 4811
Bethesda, MD 20817-4811*

E. RESPONSE DUE DATE: *August 28, 2003 @ 4pm EST*

F. TASK DESCRIPTION: *The objective of this task order is to provide comprehensive communications and public liaison support to Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) to assist in fulfilling the goal of effectively communicating NIAID information. Given the international significance of NIAID's work, particularly in the areas of biodefense and global health, OCPL needs a flexible Contractor capable of rapid response to changing priorities. The Contractor shall furnish services, qualified personnel, material, equipment, and facilities, not otherwise provided by the Government under the terms of this contract, as needed to perform the work set forth below.*

Background

The Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) communicates information about the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) goals, programs, and research advances to the general public and specific target audiences, both directly and via intermediaries, such as the news media. The office's information products include news releases; consumer health, science education, and programmatic brochures; and educational exhibits for national and regional meetings.

The office also advises the NIAID Director and other NIAID staff members on communication matters and assists NIAID staff in meeting their communication needs; assures compliance with National Institutes of Health (NIH) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) procedures for the review and clearance of public materials; serves as the point of contact for members of the media and public who wish to learn more about NIAID's research; coordinates the NIAID World Wide Web site (<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>), and facilitates collaborative relationships between NIAID and the many publics it serves.

Objective

The objective of this task order is to provide comprehensive communications and public liaison support to OCPL to assist in fulfilling the goal of effectively communicating NIAID information. Given the international significance of NIAID's work, particularly in the areas of biodefense and global health, OCPL needs a flexible Contractor capable of rapid response to changing priorities. The Contractor shall furnish services, qualified personnel, material, equipment, and facilities, not otherwise provided by the Government under the terms of this contract, as needed to perform the work set forth below.

Services

I. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Contractor shall provide professional and technical support for planning, developing, implementing, promoting, and evaluating a variety of education/information dissemination efforts. The goal of these efforts is to effectively disseminate information about NIAID-supported research and specifically highlight selected research advances that may interest scientists, health care providers, Congress, patients, and the general public. Research areas important to NIAID include, but are not limited to, allergy, asthma, HIV/AIDS, emerging infectious diseases, malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, organ transplantation, autoimmune diseases, vaccine development, and initiatives in biodefense research. Specifically, the Contractor shall:

- A. Develop plans that include conceptualizing and executing a strategy to identify various OCPL products and initiatives to increase public awareness and provide a higher level of consistency and continuity in OCPL products.
- B. Develop plans that include formulating message concept, identifying target audiences, and developing specific objectives, strategies, tactics, and measurable assessment tools for all aspects of a project. This includes, but is not limited to, developing effective education and information outreach strategies for reaching African-American, Hispanic, and other minority populations. It also includes communicating about NIAID's biodefense research programs to specific audiences, including but not limited to communities near high-containment biodefense research labs NIAID proposes to support. Assess existing programs as requested by the Project Officer.
- C. Assist OCPL in developing necessary internal and external consensus, as needed, to undertake specific projects. This task may include scheduling, setting up, and facilitating working groups.
- D. Assess appropriate target audiences, including demographics, media usage, credible information sources, significant intermediaries, etc. This shall involve gathering information from a variety of sources and may include conducting focus groups of representatives from identified target audiences.
- E. Design plans to assure adequate pilot testing of a product with selected cooperating groups. Implement product pilot testing and, with approval of the Project Officer, revise the project and/or related materials as needed.
- F. Develop approaches to encourage intermediary networks to participate. These networks may include institutions, organizations, associations, and businesses that possess established credibility and channels of communications to reach significant portions of target audiences for particular projects.
- G. Design plans to assure adequate full-scale promotion and dissemination of materials to target audiences through appropriate intermediary groups. Maintain computerized mailing lists of target audiences and develop new ones as required.
- H. Design and implement various assessments and evaluations of selected OCPL or NIAID communications program efforts. This task would include conducting a

communications audit to evaluate OCPL's current operations within the Institute regarding publications development, Web content, inquiries response, and media response and outreach. Develop proposals for implementing change that may improve OCPL functioning. These may include, but are not limited to, developing strategies for better communication with program staff about pending research advances that may be worthy to highlight in news releases, strategies for streamlining information gathering from the divisions, and ensuring quality control of information disseminated, especially in areas such as biodefense where the information is quickly changing.

II. MEDIA OUTREACH AND ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

The Contractor shall develop strategies, mechanisms, and products for disseminating topical and timely information about NIAID-related research areas to the public through the print, broadcast, and Web-based media. This may include arranging logistics for media or science writers briefings or press conferences, as needed. This task does not involve response to media inquiries or media pitching. Specifically, the Contractor shall be required to:

- A. Determine the needs and requirements of specific media outlets for special information and materials. This may include a review of available literature, interviews with media representatives and consultants, and similar efforts.
- B. Based on the needs identified above and new developments in NIAID-supported research, help OCPL staff prepare materials for dissemination to media outlets. Such materials may consist of fact sheets, charts and graphs, videotapes, still photographs, stock footage, and similar communications products.
- C. Provide packaged materials for media outlets in accordance with NIAID specifications and for NIAID use in supplying news media representatives upon request.
- D. Track and assess media coverage of specific news stories, and provide summary report to OCPL. Contractor must be able to do a media analysis when requested to measure coverage of NIAID-related stories.

III. INQUIRY RESPONSE (IR)

The Contractor shall provide the capability for responding to telephone as well as e-mail and other written requests for information and/or publications. Inquiries may require some research on the disease/condition in question or location of appropriate referrals. Research shall include looking up information in medical textbooks, searching Internet resources approved by the designated OCPL contact, and occasionally calling relevant organizations or experts. The Contractor shall have available basic medical textbooks on internal medicine and on allergic, immunologic, and infectious diseases as well as the capability of performing database searches of the medical literature, including the CRISP database (<http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/>). OCPL will provide guidance and updates of relevant information as necessary.

Inquiries are answered with either a routine (standard) or non-routine (customized) responses. OCPL shall provide its inventory of standard responses to the Contractor. The Contractor shall be responsible for updating and maintaining those standard responses, as well as developing standard responses, upon request, for review and

approval by the designated OCPL contact. Approximately 62 percent of inquiries are answered by standard response.

On non-routine responses, the designated OCPL contact will provide guidance as needed. The Contractor shall prepare draft responses for approval by the designated OCPL contact. After this review, the Contractor shall prepare e-mails and letter responses; prepare e-mails with the appropriate links and letters with the appropriate enclosures; send e-mails and mail letters, sending incoming and copy of the response to OCPL. This task requires knowledge of subject areas relevant to NIAID and diplomacy in responding to politically or emotionally sensitive inquiries. Approximately 38 percent of inquiries are answered by custom response.

The Contractor shall respond to requests for information and/or publications within fourteen (14) calendar days or as required by the Project Officer. For priority inquiries, for example, those that are addressed to the NIAID Director, the Contractor shall respond to requests for information within 48 hours. Priority inquiries average 40 per month.

The Contractor shall record the subject of each inquiry, information needed, type of requestor, response given, and materials sent in the Inquiry Response database. The Contractor may be required to evaluate the effectiveness of the current IR database, recommend modifications and/or alterations to the database, and implement recommendations. The Contractor must perform all the work in compliance with current HHS, NIH, and NIAID software development standards, see Section VIII. DATABASE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE.

OCPL will provide a policy and procedures manual that details the IR function. The Contractor shall be responsible for updating and maintaining this manual. The Contractor shall develop proposals for implementing changes that improve the performance of the IR function. Upon acceptance by the designated OCPL contact, the Contractor shall implement these changes and document them in the manual.

The Contractor shall have the ability to 1) track increased volume of inquiries due to NIAID news or special promotions, and 2) analyze and report trends on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Specifically, the Contractor shall

- A. Provide at least two telephone lines, dedicated to NIAID and staffed by trained information specialists who can provide verbal information and take requests for printed materials from callers. NIAID currently receives an average of 350 calls per month. The phones shall be answered from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday and shall be sufficiently staffed by information specialists for accurate and prompt response, with callers not needing to wait beyond 4 rings or be on hold for more than 2 minutes. The telephone lines shall be answered by information specialists on all Federal work days. At other times, an electronic answering device shall record calls.
- B. Be able to receive incoming written communications from NIAID through daily e-mail, fax, and messenger service. The Contractor shall prepare responses to written inquiries from the public about NIAID-related health and research issues. The Contractor shall be responsible for researching, composing, typing, editing, formatting, proofreading, and producing a final product. NIAID currently receives an average of 250 e-mails and 75 letters or faxes per month.
- C. Be able to prepare draft responses within 48 hours to controlled correspondence received from the designated OCPL contact. Depending on the request, final formatting and disposition may be done by the Contractor, by the OCPL contact, or by the NIAID office responsible for controlled correspondence.
- D. Provide publications fulfillment, estimated at 250 requests per month, requiring the mailing of approximately 12,500 publications (pamphlets and photocopied fact

sheets). This task requires using the IR database to record the name and address of requestor, the materials requested, titles and quantities of publications mailed, date received, and date of fulfillment; the database also generates a packing slip that will be sent with the materials. The Contractor shall print mail permit envelopes and labels, transport deliverables to the U.S. Post Office on a daily basis, and be responsible for working with Federal postal officials to make sure that all requirements are met. This task requires storage facilities for a publication inventory of approximately 153,750 pieces of printed matter.

IV. WRITING SUPPORT

- A. The Contractor shall research, write, and edit fact sheets, pamphlets, or reports. Contractor shall identify editors and science writers as needed. Writing must be tailored to target audiences, and must demonstrate familiarity with subject matter, NIAID editorial standards, and government standards for Plain Language (<http://execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang/index.html>).
- B. The Contractor shall develop or adapt materials for Spanish-language or other specific audiences, some including graphics specifically designed for the target population.

V. MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT AND GRAPHICS SUPPORT

The Contractor shall provide graphic design and production services for products such as, but not limited to, publications, presentations, communications programs, and special OCPL projects.

- A. Services shall include, but not be limited to, the design and production of materials (pamphlets, booklets, promotional flyers, fact sheets, CDs, multimedia presentations, etc.) suitable for both print and Internet distribution, taking into account the special navigation and accessibility requirements of the World Wide Web and government standards for Plain Language (<http://execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang/index.html>); exhibits; posters; programs; folders; information kits; and packaging--often with a short turnaround time.
- B. The Contractor shall have the ability to design and produce artwork, including original illustrations, montages, and photographs.
- C. The Contractor shall have the ability to produce design concepts for various types of materials that, in aggregate, represent a distinguishable “brand” or identity for a project.
- D. Materials for printing should be designed using industry standard software. All such services shall meet NIAID requirements and established editorial standards. Emphasis must be on economy and quality, with special attention paid to the restrictions on Government printing and audiovisual products.

- E. The Contractor shall have the ability to perform quality control, e.g., proofreading, third-party review, etc., on products presented to OCPL for acceptance. Products returned to the Contractor by OCPL for corrections must be resubmitted error free, with no new errors introduced. If more than five percent of the products re-presented to OCPL for acceptance are returned to the Contractor for corrections, OCPL will inspect the Contractor's quality control process and will require the Contractor to implement changes to improve the quality control process.
- F. The Contractor shall maintain an inventory of graphics and visuals for each project, including information such as subject, credits, and right-managed status.

VI. EXHIBIT SUPPORT

- A. Each September, the Contractor shall propose a schedule of meetings for the following calendar year appropriate for NIAID materials and/or exhibits, state the rationale for attending, and provide estimated costs. After a preliminary schedule has been approved by the appropriate OCPL contact, the Contractor shall prepare a detailed calendar, including theme, location, and size of each meeting, the exhibit structure to be sent, dates for materials shipment, and suggestions for relevant print materials and quantities to be distributed. OCPL may add or remove meetings from the preliminary schedule as the year progresses. OCPL currently participates in approximately 30 events each year. Of the 30, approximately 20 are materials-only events; approximately 10 are exhibit space and materials events. Of this 10, approximately 5 require the Contractor to staff.
- B. The Contractor shall be responsible for making arrangements for the exhibit space, shipping exhibit and materials, and for providing staffing at exhibits, when appropriate. Upon prior approval by the Project Officer, OCPL will pay for contractor travel and accommodations, in accordance with FAR regulations.
- C. The Contractor shall store exhibits and materials on behalf of NIAID, arrange for shipment of exhibits and materials back to the storage facility after meetings, check on the condition of the returned exhibit, and recommend necessary repairs. After staffing an exhibit, the Contractor shall prepare follow-up reports, which should include recommendations for future attendance, and deliver it to the Project Officer within ten (10) business days of returning from the meeting.

VII. CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

The Contractor shall support conference and meeting management activities. This includes scientific conferences, planning meetings, press conferences, science writers briefings, etc., and involves conference planning, logistics, registration, and technical support including but not limited to audio-visual support, Web broadcasting, transcript recordings, and taking minutes. For proposal purposes, the offeror can assume approximately one per year.

VIII. DATABASE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The Contractor shall have the capability to maintain and upgrade existing databases, develop new databases, and/or acquire new software, as necessary, that can be tailored to OCPL's needs. Existing databases include a database of constituent organizations and media (approximately 4,000 names), and an IR database that tracks public inquiries and materials inventory.
- B. The Contractor shall perform all the work in compliance with current DHHS, NIH, and NIAID software development standards. As part of this process the

- Contractor shall ensure the specifications meet the technical requirements. To do so, the Contractor shall present the proposed solution to NIAID Office of Technology Information Systems (OTIS) and OCPL as they are being developed, for review, confirmation of compliance, and approval for the proposed work, software, and actions, before implementing or purchasing any specific product.
- C. Any computer system for data management or any new software must meet NIAID OTIS standards and should be developed with the software, Operating Systems, languages, and tools recommended by OTIS to insure integrated operability with NIAID's databases and infrastructure. The Contractor shall consult with and receive approval from the Contracting Officer, the Project Officer, and OTIS technical experts before proceeding with any software purchase or development.
 - D. Management tools, computer systems, databases, documentation, data, any other files (electronic or otherwise), and any items developed via this contract, will remain the property of the U.S. Government.

IX. MAILINGS

- A. The Contractor shall prepare mass mailings, including printing or photocopying, stuffing, labeling, and mailing, sometimes within a 24- to 48-hour turnaround time.
- B. The Contractor shall print mail permit envelopes and labels, transport deliverables to the U.S. Post Office on a daily basis, and be responsible for working with Federal postal officials to make sure that all requirements are met.

X. VIDEO/AUDIOTAPE ARCHIVE

The Contractor shall maintain OCPL's video/audiotape archive. The archive currently houses approximately 1,000 items, most of which are recordings of broadcast interviews. OCPL anticipates adding approximately 75 items to the video/audiotape archive each year. OCPL has a list of these video/audio recordings that detail the broadcast date, program, and topic, and a database that is not fully populated with this information. The Contractor shall have the capability to maintain the database, recommend changes to the database, and upgrade the database in accordance with Section VIII. DATABASE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE. The Contractor shall have the ability to duplicate videotapes in VHS format or convert these tapes to a digitized format viewable with NIAID standard computer equipment, and recommend storage alternatives for the archive.

XI. HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

The Contractor shall maintain OCPL's historical archive, which consists of artifacts, posters publications, etc. For most proposal purposes, offeror can assume approximately 1,000 square feet of storage space will be required.

XII. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

- A. The Contractor shall establish an office and processing facility in the greater Washington, DC area within reasonable commuting distance of the OCPL offices in Bethesda and Rockville, MD.
- B. Prepare work plans and cost estimates, technical reports, and other contract administrative and management reports. These shall include, but not be limited to:
1. Startup plan. Provide a detailed startup plan showing how ongoing activities will be transferred within 30 days of contract award and how new support mechanisms will be implemented within 60 days of the contract award.
 2. Work plans. The work plan shall be based on the statement of work and shall define the tasks to be accomplished; methods for achieving these tasks; allocation of specific personnel, staff hours, and costs by task; and timelines and milestones for each task. The plan should also include provisions for developing and updating procedures that outline quality control measures, cost-effective strategies for carrying out proposed tasks, including cost recovery, and detailed instructions for each task to ensure the highest quality of products and services. The contractor shall prepare and deliver work plans, and related cost estimates, within 10 working days of contract award.
 3. Backup plans for electronic data. Provide plans showing how any electronic files created under this contract will be protected against loss or damage, and contingency plans in place for recovery of electronic files.
 4. Weekly status reports to be delivered every Monday for the prior week.
Weekly reports shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Narrative accomplishments report for all tasks
 - Prospective action and status report for all tasks
 - Inquiry response report of e-mail inquiries
 5. Monthly status reports to be delivered by the 10th of the following month.
Monthly reports shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Accomplishments, progress, and potential risks for all tasks
 - Contract level of effort and charges
 - Contract hours worked
 - Contract summary FTEs
 - Summary inquiry response report by mode of inquiry, type of request, level of response
 - Detailed inquiry response report by record
 - Inquiry response report of telephone volume, hold time, abandon rate
 - Materials inventory distributed
 - Materials inventory status
 6. Periodic reports shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Post-exhibit report when the Contractor is asked to staff a booth; due 10 business days after return from the exhibiting event
 - Meeting reports, as requested, to document decisions made, action items, etc.

- C. The Contractor shall meet with the Project Officer at NIAID at least once each month to discuss and review items of work to be assigned or already assigned but requiring revision. These meetings shall involve the contractor project director and selected contractor staff as designated by the Project Officer.
- D. The Contractor will provide messenger service between NIAID and the Contractor's location for daily pickup and delivery of mail. Daily pickups and deliveries shall be between the Contractor and OCPL's offices in Building 31 and in 6610 Rockledge. The contract messengers should be prepared to pickup and deliver to NIAID staff in the other Rockville offices and other on-campus offices on an as-needed basis. The Contractor must have the capability to respond to emergency requests for pickup or delivery of material. Note: For proposal purposes, offeror can assume approximately five (5) emergency pickups each month.

XIII. TRANSITION PLAN AND CLOSE OUT

- A. Transition plans. Within 60 days from the end of the contract, the Contractor shall provide a detailed transition plan showing how ongoing activities will be transferred, and the costs associated with the creation and implementation of this plan.
- B. Closeout. At the time of contract expiration, the Contractor shall:
1. Cooperate fully with the successor Contractor. Participate in meetings and/or telephone conversations with the Project Officer and successor Contractor to discuss current procedures and activities in detail and to develop a delivery schedule for the transfer of materials.
 2. Deliver to the successor Contractor all stored publications and materials, any equipment provided or purchased under the contract, all electronic files used in the creation of publications, all reference materials purchased under contract, all archives and correspondence files, all publications and materials used in responding to inquiries purchased under contract, any administrative or program files relating to this contract, and a final material and publications inventory.
 3. Deliver to the Project Officer, and the successor Contractor if directed by the Project Officer
 - All software and data management tools used/developed under the Contract, including any needed licensure and maintenance agreements entered into by the Contractor for such software.
 - Clean, edited documentation on all the software developed under this contract, as specified by Project Officer, including but not limited to:
 - A Data Dictionary that is current, defining tables, procedures, and data within each table for each database
 - A Database Entity Relationship Diagram that is current, showing the relationship of all tables within the application
 - A Web Site Topology Schema that is current, showing the Web site structure
 - Source Code for all Web-based Applications with a list of components for every application
 - A System Administrator manual for each system/application developed under this contract
 - User training/system manual(s) for each system/application developed under this contract
 - If commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products were purchased under the contract, all such (including licensure and any maintenance agreements entered into by the Contractor for such

software) shall be transferred to the Government and removed from all Contractor owned equipment.

Pack all materials in boxes, each labeled with a unique number, and deliver beginning the first working day of the last week of the last month of the contract period. Provide the Project Officer and the successor Contractor, if directed by the Project Officer, copies of an inventory showing the contents of each box.

G. EVALUATION FACTORS:

I. GENERAL

Selection of an offeror of contract award will be based on an evaluation of proposals against three factors. The factors in order of importance are: technical, cost, and past performance. Although technical factors are of paramount consideration in the award of the contract, both past performance and cost/price are also important to the overall contract award decision. All evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than cost or price. Offerors are advised that award will be made to that offeror whose proposal provides the best overall value to the Government.

The evaluation will be based on the experience and demonstrated capabilities of the prospective contractors in relation to the needs of the project as set forth in the RFP. The merits of each proposal will be evaluated carefully. Each proposal must document the feasibility of successful implementation of the requirements of the RFP. Offerors must submit information sufficient to evaluate their proposals based on the detailed criteria listed below.

The technical portion of the proposal will be the most important single consideration in the award of the contract and should, therefore, be as complete and specific as possible. The merits of each proposal will be carefully evaluated in terms of the requirements and in relation to the criteria established below. The evaluation will be based on the technical and administrative capabilities of prospective contractors in relation to the needs of the project and the reasonableness of costs shown in relation to this project.

II. PAST PERFORMANCE

The Government will evaluate the quality of the offeror's past performance based on the information obtained from references provided by the offeror, other relevant past performance information obtained from other sources known to the Government, and any information supplied by the offeror concerning problems encountered on the identified contracts and corrective action taken.

The Government will assess the relative risks associated with each offeror. Performance risks are those associated with an offeror's likelihood of success in performing the acquisition requirements as indicated by that offeror's record of past performance.

The assessment of performance risk is not intended to be a product of mechanical or mathematical analysis of an offeror's performance on a list of contracts, but rather the product of subjective judgment by the Government after it considers relevant information.

When assessing performance risks, the Government will focus on the past performance of the offeror as it relates to all acquisition requirements, such as the offeror's record of performing according to specifications, including adherence to the highest standards of workmanship; the offeror's record of controlling and forecasting costs; the offeror's adherence to contract schedules, including the administrative aspects of performance; the offeror's reputation for reasonable and cooperative behavior and commitment to customer satisfaction; and generally, the offeror's business-like concern for the interest of the customer.

Past performance will not be scored, but the Government's conclusion about overall quality of the offeror's past performance will be highly influential in determining the relative merits of the offeror's proposal and in selecting the offeror whose proposal is considered most advantageous to the Government.

III. MANDATORY QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Listed below is the mandatory qualification criterion. The qualification criterion establishes conditions that must be met at the time of receipt of Best and Final Offers (BAFO) by the Contracting Officer in order for your proposal to be considered any further for awards.

Offerors shall have an office and processing facility located in the greater Washington, DC area within a reasonable commuting distance of the OCPL offices in Bethesda and Rockville.

IV. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria are used by the technical evaluation committee when reviewing the technical proposals. The criteria below are listed in the order of relative importance with weights assigned for evaluation purposes.

Offerors shall be evaluated on the basis of the demonstrated experience and understanding of the objectives and requirements of the statement of work and the specific description of how personnel will perform each of the required tasks. The offeror should prepare a succinct proposal that demonstrates:

A. Understanding of the Problem 10%

The offeror must provide a comprehensive statement of the scope and purpose of the project to demonstrate complete understanding of the intent and requirements. This understanding should provide a clear awareness of the contract objectives and their significance. Offeror should demonstrate knowledge of the mission and research of NIAID; sources of information in these areas; and resources available to the public and research and health professionals.

B. Technical Approach 35%

The offeror must provide documentation of the capability to perform all tasks required by the Statement of Work.

The offeror must provide a detailed plan for each task that demonstrates thoughtful planning and creative problem-solving, and that results in the development and creation of accurate, timely, and audience-appropriate communications products. For the inquiry response function, the plan should include the offeror's system for triaging inquiries, and the process used for developing and maintaining standard and custom responses.

The offeror must provide a detailed plan for an effective system of quality control, citing examples of its experience with the types of errors that may be encountered in each task, and the mechanisms it has in place to guard against future occurrence of such errors.

The offeror must provide specific plans for quality assurance against the requirements of the contract, and evaluation of services provided under this contract.

The offeror must demonstrate the adequacy of plans for ensuring the hiring and retention of highly qualified staff. It should provide a detailed plan for ensuring performance of the services in the event of staff shortages due to illness, attrition, etc.

C. Qualifications of the Organization and Proposed Staff 35%

Corporate capability

The offeror must demonstrate evidence of corporate experience relevant to the proposed procurement. The offeror shall list all Government and commercial contracts, grants, and other awards of a nature, complexity, and magnitude similar to the proposed procurement that were awarded to or performed by the offeror within the past four (4) years. Such a list should include

1. Contract/grant number
2. Monetary value and type of contract/grant
3. Description of services furnished
4. Name of Government agency and/or commercial company
5. Current address and telephone number of the cognizant Government contracting/grant officer and cognizant project officer, if applicable

Personnel requirements.

The personnel to be used under this contract will be evaluated on the basis of experience, qualifications, and availability of proposed staff to provide management, creative, and technical skills necessary to the successful performance of each task.

1. The Project Director must be designated, and shall be a senior staff member of the company. He/she shall be evaluated on prior performance and demonstrated ability in effective program management and in cost and quality control. Supporting materials shall include a resume showing extensive education, training, and experience in effectively managing programs of a scope and complexity comparable to this program, and statements of reference concerning management activities similar to those solicited. If the offeror's proposal includes subcontracting relationships, evidence must be provided of the ability of the Project Director to ensure timely completion of quality work from a subcontractor.
2. The Creative Director must be designated, and shall be experienced in working closely with creative teams to define OCPL requirements and translate them into professional products. Experience in conceptualizing, creating, and implementing a branding strategy is desirable. For the creative director, samples of materials directed by him or her should be submitted, and shall be labeled to indicate the level of involvement of the project creative director. Samples should include descriptions of audience, purpose, and distribution for each piece.
3. The Senior Information Specialist must be designated, and shall have at least a bachelor's degree and documented experience answering phone, e-mail, and letter inquiries. Experience in a health-related field, and evidence of good writing and verbal skills must be provided.
4. The communications planning staff must have a documented background in health communications and experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating health education and information distribution programs.
5. The database staff must have documented experience in maintaining and upgrading existing databases and developing new ones, and in acquiring and adapting new software as necessary to meet OCPL's needs.
6. The design/graphics/desktop publishing staff must have demonstrated design, layout, and typography training and experience (including desktop publishing) for producing a variety of materials including brochures, pamphlets, and flyers for both print and online distribution.
7. The writing and editorial staff must have specialized training or education in science writing or editing as well as demonstrated ability to develop or edit written materials that effectively "translate" scientific and/or technical information for various target audiences, using plain language or easy-to-read standards.
8. Other personnel, as required to perform all tasks described in the Statement of Work, e.g., logistics and planning staff for exhibits and conferences, audiovisual support staff, administrative staff, etc.

D. Samples

10%

1. Materials and graphics samples should include brochures, flyers, and marketing materials for audiences similar to those targeted for this program. These samples should indicate the level of editing needed to produce the final product and an explanation of the purpose of the product. The number of copies distributed should also be included in the description, as well as any distribution plan that may have been created for the product. Samples that demonstrate the offeror's ability to execute a branding strategy should be submitted. Samples of materials directed by the proposed Creative Director should be submitted and labeled to indicate the level of involvement of the Creative Director.
2. For the senior information specialist, develop responses to the following sample inquiries using NIAID publications (see <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/>), referrals to other Government agencies, databases, and consumer health information resources.
 - a. What can you tell me about diseases caused by unsanitary food handling practices?
 - b. I need to find a specialist who can treat a recurring intestinal infection by what seems to be a drug-resistant form of giardiasis. My doctors have tried everything. Who does research on drug-resistant giardia infection? If not, can you tell me where I can go for treatment? I will

try anything. Between the recurring episodes of diarrhea and loss of appetite, I have lost 35 pounds. I cannot live like this. Please help.

3. Each Sample shall be clearly identified with the RFP number and offeror name. All samples should be clearly labeled as to who produced them, the date of production, and the role of the proposed personnel in the process. Offerors are to submit only one (1) box of samples in a box that does not exceed 18" long, 12" wide and 10" tall (a standard box of copy paper). All samples will be assessed by reviewers for creativity, clarity, visual effectiveness, and ability to target the intended audience.

E. Relationships with Public and Professional Organizations 5%

Offeror should have experience working with hard-to-reach populations and health professionals who serve them, as well as documented relationships with public and professional organizations in health-related areas including AIDS and infectious diseases.

F. Adequacy of Facilities 5%

Documented evidence that the offeror has access to facilities and all types of office equipment and compatible computer software necessary to fulfill the Work Statement.

TITLE: NIAID OCPL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC LIAISON SUPPORT

PART II - CONTRACTOR'S REPLY: CONTRACT #263-01-D-0

Contractor:

Points of Contact:

Phone-

Fax-

Address:

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:

Pricing Method: CPFF

TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOURS:

PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:

FOR THE

CONTRACTOR: _____
Signature Date

SOURCE SELECTION:

WE HAVE REVIEWED ALL SUBMITTED PROPOSALS HAVE DETERMINED
THIS FIRM SUBMITTED THE BEST OVERALL PROPOSAL AND THE
PRICE/COST IS REASONABLE.

Billing Reference # _____

Appropriations Data: _____

(ATTACH OBLIGATING DOCUMENT IF AN ROC WILL NOT BE USED.)

RECOMMENDED:

FAX #	Signature - Project Officer	Date
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APPROVED: _____

FAX #	Signature - Contracting Officer	Date
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NIH APPROVAL -

CONTRACTOR SHALL NOT EXCEED THE ESTIMATED LABOR HOURS OR
ESTIMATED TASK ORDER AMOUNT WITHOUT THE WRITTEN APPROVAL
OF THE CONTRACTING OFFICER & PICS COORDINATOR

APPROVED: _____
Signature –Anthony M. Revenis, J.D., NIH-PICS Coordinator Date